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For Immediate Release:

**CONEY ISLAND ANNOUNCED THE RECIPIENTS OF THE 2020 NEW YEAR'S DAY POLAR BEAR PLUNGE
WITH DONATIONS TOTALING OVER \$60,000!**

Coney Island, March 9, 2020 – The Coney Island Polar Bear Club awarded donations totaling over \$60,000 to local nonprofits in the Coney Island community yesterday. The Club chose a total of 9 organizations that demonstrate community leadership ranging from advocacy, public programming, educational resources, and youth engagement. The generous donation is a result of proceeds raised from the 116th Annual New Year's Day Polar Bear Plunge in Coney Island which had more than 3,000 registered participants, a record-breaking year in both attendance and fundraising.

"The Coney Island Polar Bear Club is indebted to all attendees at our New Year's Day Plunge and their generosity. With the funds raised on New Year's Day, we are able to support a number of cultural and non-profit organizations within the Coney Island community. Our annual New Year's Day plunge is not only a traditional celebration of the New Year, but an opportunity to contribute to the community that makes Coney Island, and New York City what it is," said Dennis Thomas, President, Coney Island Polar Bear Club.

One of the largest donations was made to the **New York Aquarium** which received \$20,000. The donated funds will help support the New York Aquarium's local conservation initiative, the New York Seascapes program. Specifically, the money will help fund the Seascapes' work studying the region's whale and shark populations, help restore healthy populations of alewife herring and American eels to local waterways, and build a local marine conservation constituency in Coney Island, which will help keep New York's waters safe for wildlife and people. In addition, the fundraising partner, the **Alliance for Coney Island**, received \$22,000 which will support their free summer events such as the weekly Friday Night Fireworks, job recruitment events that help connect Brooklynites to job opportunities in Coney Island, and advocacy for improvements to the Coney Island community. Other community-based

organizations like **Coney Island USA, Coney Island History Project, Coney Island Brighton Beach Open Water Swimmers, the NY State Marine Education Association, NYC Parks Foundation, and Parachute Literary Arts** received donations ranging from \$500 - \$10,000. The **Coney Island YMCA** was awarded \$3,000 for their summer camp scholarship program, a program that allows several children from the community to attend camp over the summer and engage in activities that will enhance their social skills, help keep their academics on track, keep them physically active, and challenge them to learn new things every day.

“We are proud to be a collaborator on organizing the 116th New Year’s Day Polar Bear Plunge. This year was exhilarating as we ushered in the new decade and we are excited to be able to be the conduit to fundraise for many great neighbor organizations. We look forward to seeing even more New Yorkers come out in 2021 to celebrate and help fund these great causes,” said Alexandra Silversmith, Executive Director of the Alliance for Coney Island.

“Once again, we owe a big thank you to the Coney Island Polar Bear Club and their support for the conservation work of the New York Aquarium,” said New York Aquarium Director Jon Forrest Dohlin. “The money generated from the New Year’s Day Plunge will help fund our work to study sharks and whales just offshore of the aquarium, and protect vital wildlife and habitat right here in the waters of New York.”

To plan a trip to Coney Island and stay up-to-date on all Coney happenings, make sure to visit **ConeyIslandFunGuide.com**, sign up for our weekly newsletter and follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, **@ConeyIslandFun**.

Alliance for Coney Island

The not-for-profit Alliance for Coney Island, Inc. is a private-public partnership dedicated to continuing the year-round revitalization of Coney Island. The Alliance represents local businesses, nonprofits, and the community, with support from the New York City Council, the Brooklyn Borough President, and New York City Economic Development Corporation. More info at www.AllianceforConeyIsland.org.

The Coney Island Polar Bear Club

The Coney Island Polar Bear Club is the oldest winter bathing organization in the United States. We swim in the Atlantic Ocean at Coney Island every Sunday from November through April. Since 1903, we have been hosting a public New Year’s Day Plunge for all brave souls to welcome the New Year. While the event is free, we do encourage plungers to make a donation to our charity sponsors. In the past decade, the Club has raised over \$500,000 to support charities. This year we are supporting the NY Aquarium, the Alliance for Coney Island and local non-profit community organizations in the Coney Island Community.



All the awardees.
Photo credit: Norman Blake



Photo credit: Norman Blake



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